

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*

(Galatians 3:28)

The purpose of the Pastoral Relations Commission (PRC), as stated in the terms of reference, is as follows:

The Pastoral Relations Commission will set policy and give direction within their mandate.

The Pastoral Relations Commission will provide support for ministry personnel throughout their ministry, including equipping, covenanting, pastoral relationships and retirement.

In reality, this involves things such as: co-operating with communities of faith in recruiting, choosing, calling, appointing, and covenanting with ministry personnel and communities of faith; ending calls, appointments, and covenants with ministry personnel; appointing a pastoral relations liaison to assist a community of faith in pastoral relations matters at designated times; appointing pastoral charge supervisors when needed. We are also responsible for encouraging and supporting ministry personnel toward health, joy, and excellence in ministry practice through our Flourish initiative; and assisting with informal conflict resolution processes. This responsibility is shared with the Communities of Faith Commission.

Currently, the PRC meets monthly on Zoom, although our October meeting was an in-person meeting held with the Communities of Faith Commission. At each of our meetings we review a list of calls and appointments, and at times license those needing to administer the sacraments; we review requests for a change of pastoral relations; and we review recommendations from the LLWL Committee for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders (LLWL) and respond to requests for Voluntary Associate Minister status. We also set and review policies which guide pastoral relations work in the region and receive reports from staff. Some of the other annual highlights from our meetings have been:

- a) the Ministry Personnel Marriage License Policy was reviewed
- b) the annual telephone allowance was reviewed
- c) it was agreed that financial support for a Black Clergy Network Gathering, 2024 could be provided from our budget
- d) a budget for the commission for the year 2024 was recommended to the regional council
- e) a Ministers Day Together was held June 14 at Jubilee United Church, under the leadership of The Reverend Maya Landell, Jason Locke and Moderator, The Right Reverend Carmen Lansdowne
- f) new members were appointed to the Flourish Advisory Group, whose mandate is "Care, Connect, Collaborate"
- g) as a part of the ongoing work of Flourish, a November retreat for clergy was held at Fern Resort in collaboration with Canadian Shield Regional Council
- h) dates for a 2024 fall retreat and Ministers Day Together have been set

- i) Dale, Eun-Joo, Kim Uyede-Kai and Rob Smith (new Pastoral Relations Ministers) met with small groups of ministry personnel across the southern part of the region in February
- j) in collaboration with the Communities of Faith Commission, the PRC began to look at how we can support lay-led congregations

One piece of ongoing work for the commission is the work on the Equity Project received at our meeting in June, 2021. The PRC through the work of the Equity Task Group is committed to the removal of barriers to employment for equity-seeking ministry personnel. Here is what the commission accomplished since the last annual meeting of the regional council.

- A Role Description for an Equity Advocate for the PRC was approved and implemented with the naming of an advocate.
- The membership of the commission was revised to include one person who is a Pastoral Relations Liaison, to be named by the PRC
- A welcome letter to be sent to all ministry personnel new to the region was approved and is now being sent out by the region
- A ‘welcome to the region’ lunch—for all ministry personnel new to the region—to be held annually at the regional annual meeting will be implemented at the 2024 meeting

Thank you to everyone who has served as a pastoral relations liaison or pastoral charge supervisor during the past year. Your support, service and care in assisting the ministry of SWRC has been most appreciated.

I want to thank the members of the PRC for all of their work throughout this year. The members of the commission are: Andrew Comar (ordered); William Houghton (ordered); Barbara Hendren (lay); Sung Ran Kim (ordered); Deirdre Lawrence (lay); Liz Mackenzie (ordered); Beth Moore (lay); Lawrence Nyarko (ordered); Robin Pilkey (lay); Paul Stott (lay); Donna Bowman-Woodall (ordered). Your willingness to give so freely of your time, expertise and diverse perspectives is greatly appreciated.

The ministry of the PRC and the work of the chair is supported by a faithful and dedicated staff team. I offer heartfelt thanks to Donna Rutz, our staff administrative support who keeps us on track, ensuring paperwork is organized, minutes are recorded, and details are attended to. Sincere thanks also to Todd McDonald, and Dale Hildebrand, our Pastoral Relations Ministers, whose wisdom, advice, and care has supported the commission beyond measure. We had the privilege of saying farewell to Dale in February, while during the year we welcomed Eun-Joo Park, Kim Uyede-Kai and Rob Smith as new pastoral relations staff and look forward to working with them.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Bowman-Woodall (Rev.), Chair